

BiNet News

RENILDO J. DOS SANTOS AWARD

Lani Ka'ahaumanu Wins dos Santos Award

by Wayne Roberts

The International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) is a world-wide federation of national and local groups and individuals dedicated to achieving equal rights for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people everywhere.

The 1999 Renildo Jose dos Santos Award recipients were announced at the ILGA world conference in South Africa in September. The 1999 award recipients were Lani Ka'ahaumanu, a long time bi activist and educator from the USA and Dr. Suman Lahiry, a bi/gay men's educator and support worker from Bangladesh. Wayne Roberts, national coordinator of the Australian Bisexual Network, the organization that sponsors this annual Award, and Alejandra Sardá, ILGA Women's Secretary from Argentina, presented the Award.

"I give my warmest mahalos (thanks) to my colleague Wayne Roberts and the Australian Bisexual Network for this special recognition," wrote Lani in her acceptance speech. "I am humbled and deeply honored to have been chosen to receive the International Renildo José dos Santos Memorial Award for Bisexual Activism."

"Congratulations to my co-honoree Dr. Suman Lahiry for his dedicated activism in Bangladesh," she continued. "I send wild appreciation to my bisexual sister ILGA Women's Secretary Alejandra Sarda from Argentina, whose activism and integrity is an inspiration to me. And to those fierce bisexual, transgender, transsexual, lesbian, gay and

intersex people and our allies assembled here today I send my aloha to all of you from my home in San Francisco and wish you a productive, and completely fabulous conference."

Lani's poem "The Naked Place" (see back cover) was read at the ILGA conference. The award honors the memory of Brazilian gay/bi activist, Renildo José dos Santos, who was assassinated in 1993. Past recipients of the Award have included Robyn Ochs of the Bisexual Resource Center, Boston, USA in 1997 and Alejandra Sardá of Escrita en el Cuerpo, Lesbian, Bisexual and Different Women's Archives and Library in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1998.

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BiNet's Mission is to collect and distribute information regarding bisexuality; to facilitate the development of bisexual community and visibility; to work for the equal rights and liberation of bisexuals and all oppressed peoples; and to eradicate all forms of oppression inside and outside the bisexual community. We are committed to being affirmatively inclusive of a multicultural constituency and political agenda.

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Letters, cartoons, photographs and articles are encouraged and welcome for consideration. Please send to Ann Schranz, 12421 Eloian Drive, Thonotosassa, FL 33592.

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BiNet USA has Regional Organizers and Area Organizers. Call (202) 986-7186 or check the BiNet web site (www.binetusa.org) for the organizer nearest you.

Northeast Region: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island

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Southwest Region: Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah

Northwest Region: Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Washington, and Wyoming

Pacific Coast Region: California, Guam, and Hawaii

BiNet USA Rescinds Support of ENDA in Current Form

At its annual National Meeting, BiNet voted to withdraw its support of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) until "gender-inclusion" language has been added. They have now added their voices to the growing number of GLBT organizations across the country who feel that ENDA should also protect people based on "gender identity" and "gender expression." The current language would only protect an individual from employment discrimination based on their sexual orientation.

The proposal presented to the BiNet USA membership for withdrawing support for ENDA was drafted by Monica Helms, a transgender activist and the Area Organizer for BiNet Arizona. The proposal showed two reasons for why BiNet USA should consider this course of action. The first reason stated that "ENDA is

inconsistent with BiNet's beliefs. The best way to change this inconsistency is to drop our support until the language has been amended."

The other reason was based on a recent survey done by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF.) The survey found that "28% of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual people have been discriminated based in part to their 'gender expression'." The proposal further states that "without changing the language, ENDA will fail to cover all the people it is suppose to cover, including many bisexuals."

As a committed ally to the transgender community, BiNet USA's membership voted to rescind our support of ENDA. Although the passing of ENDA could be a step towards our mission of working against oppression, our membership voiced, we will not support legislation that is non-inclusive of gender-variance and gender-expression.



From Ann, the Editrix . . .

This is the first of four editions of the BiNet News that I will edit. It has been six years since I joined BiNet USA. In 1993, I moved from sophisticated Los Angeles to rural north central Florida. I had identified as lesbian for 10 years before my move, and I moved to live closer to a man with whom I fell in love.

I arrived in Florida on April 15. Before the end of that month, I was in Washington, D.C. for the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, and Bi Rights. The 1993 BiNet annual meeting was my first. I remember feeling thrilled to be among so many bisexuals. I also remember feeling disoriented. My new "bisexual" identity did not feel comfortable yet. I did not always understand why people were so passionate about some of the issues being discussed. I wondered why there were not more bisexuals in the room. I still wonder why there are not more bisexuals in the room.

I became a Regional Organizer for the Southeast for a year or two, and later I maintained the database, sending out "welcome" letters and "time to renew" letters for two years. My commitment to BiNet USA has remained steadfast because I agree with its mission, I respect its leadership (especially since I know there is room for everyone who wants to be a leader), and I believe its work is important.

On my refrigerator are these words of Mab Segrest, "Laughter is revolution. Our job is to use love, anger, and imagination to show us where to go, and laughter to keep us alive while we get there. And we must not use laughter to make us endure what courage can change." May we encourage each other.

You are invited to submit articles and ideas for articles. Please email them to me at "annschrantz@aol.com" or mail them to me at 12421 Eloian Drive, Thonotosassa, FL 33592. The next deadline is expected to be November 30, 1999.

BAFFLED Anti-Conference Changes Culture

by Michael Szymanski

The BAFFLED Anti-Conference this Fall was a wild success. We may have run into somewhat of a financial deficit, but a generous anonymous donor will make sure that we will at least break even. The arts, the inspiration, the comedy, the fun, (yes, and even the *sports*) were enough to revive and spark creative juices in everyone.

We made comic books with people who've never drawn before. We made actors out of people who have never acted before, and created a digital booklet of a hysterically funny series of photos taken at the conference. We taught people how to go on talk shows, how to write, how to sing, how to make bi poetry and where to find it, how to eroticize our fantasies, and find partners, and how to masturbate.

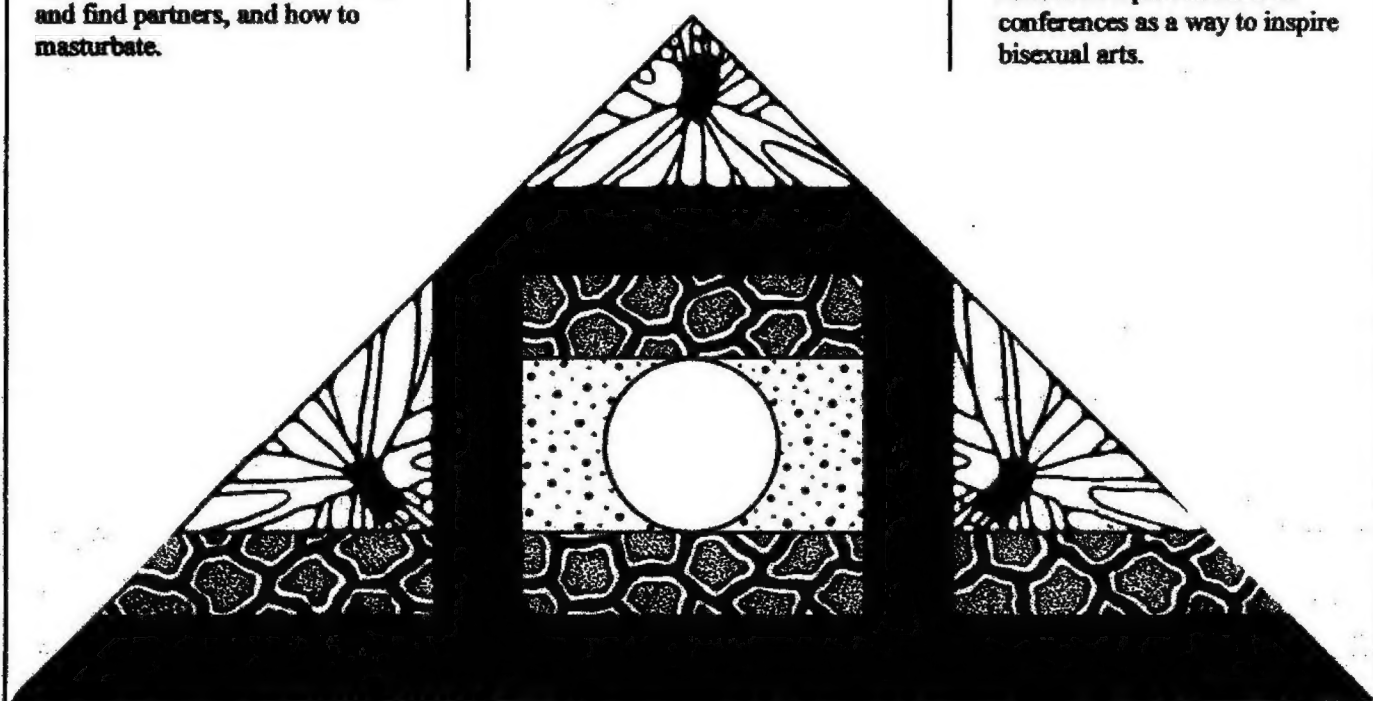
We played softball (the Fence-sitters *creamed* the Switchhitters, by the way), we made masks, we partied, we sang Rocky Horror Picture Show Songs, we sold dates at a Silent Auction and made money. We laughed at great comedy, we cried, we saw some great bi films — erotic, educational, and different — we had some incredibly beautiful art in the center's Gallery. We ate great food, we wrote great scenarios, we created stories, plays, screenplays, we bent genders and re-wrote classics. And that was only part of it.

I hope that the world discovered Michael Dane as the most incredibly out bisexual funny comedian around, as well as the wonderful Richard Tanner, who hosted Saturday's event. The people who did the playshops all got great feedback, and your creations were all brilliant.

We're always interested in a next time, and so if there's anyone willing to do this, even on a small scale, please contact BiNet USA, and they can put you in touch with BiNet Los Angeles. There are many possibilities and ongoing things to do with what was started at this BAFFLED.

We had a kick-ass committee, with Shannon, Clare, Paulette, John, Kyle, and I truly enjoyed working on this with them since January. I hope it was fulfilling for you all, too. We created something from scratch that has never been done before. I truly believe that someday people will look back on this, and say that this was a landmark moment in bisexual history and a moment when the realization that bisexual culture can in fact be created.

I will be happy to help spread the BAFFLED (Bisexual Arts, Film Festival, Literature, Entertainment and Drama) Anti-Conference idea throughout the world, or even have it be a part of other bi conferences as a way to inspire bisexual arts.



From Angry Outsider to Board Member

by Melissa White

In 1997, after living in Japan for two years, I returned to San Francisco hungry for the queer culture I had been missing so badly. I wanted very much to become part of an established bisexual community and to find a sense of belonging to the larger queer community. Searching for clues to help me along the way, I visited A Different Light bookstore on Castro Street and picked up a publication I'd never seen before.

On the cover, "Harvey Milk Institute" appeared above a beautiful lavender pansy. The image caught my attention, but what kept it was the bold statement underneath: "Continuing education for our diverse gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities." It was the catalog for an independent queer studies school, founded during my absence, and it promised education for bisexuals! As a writing teacher and a lifelong student, I knew instantly that I had to be part of HMI.

I rushed to a cafe and read the catalog cover to cover. Everything about the school and its philosophy appealed to me. A non-profit dedicated to making both practical and theoretical aspects of queer studies accessible

to all, HMI's offerings ranged from free art classes for youth to car repair for dykes. I saw courses on literature, performance, writing, career, finance, history, politics and sexuality.

But guess what I didn't find? Even one course on bisexuality... My heart sank and I felt angry. Why were our issues always left out? After stewing for a few days, I developed a what-the-hell attitude. The school invited new course proposals, and I was a teacher, so I would propose a course myself, dammit. The Executive Director, Kevin Schaub,

"After stewing for a few days, I developed a what-the-hell attitude."

was gracious on the telephone. He said HMI had previously run one course on bisexual dating and desperately needed more proposals with a bisexual focus. He encouraged me to send one in, and I did.

When my proposal for a reading and writing course was accepted, I panicked that I didn't know enough to teach it. The emergency SOS signals I broadcast into bi cyberspace were answered by many generous offers of help from experienced activists, teachers and authors. In retrospect, I see that this panic precipitated my entrance into BiNet USA and various bi communities, which have been crucial sources of support,

education, leadership training and new dates for me.

I taught "Switch Hit Lit" for two terms, then began recruiting other bi teachers to develop new courses. Lani Ka'ahumanu is now teaching a first-ever 3-part series on the history of bisexual politics through the 70's, 80's and 90's. Between the two of us, we've brought in almost a dozen other bi activists and writers to speak with our students during classes. And the students, over 3 terms, have taught me more than I taught them.

Working with HMI, I've had wonderful opportunities to meet some amazing queer activists, performers, teachers and artists and to learn new skills like grant writing, event planning and volunteer coordination. Recently, I've turned my attention more toward fundraising and organizational development. I've been on the HMI Board of Directors for a year now, and two grants I wrote for HMI have been approved for funding in the last few months. These experiences have enabled me to start a new career in free-lance grant writing.

It feels great to be an out bisexual operating in HMI and with our collaborative partners, helping to ensure that they are bi and trans inclusive. As HMI continues to grow, I know I'm nurturing the bonds that make our communities stronger for all of us.



Honoring The Body Sacred

by Loraine Hutchins

Each spring Body Sacred blooms in the Pocono mountains of Pennsylvania, a loving community of people who gather to covenant sex and spirit healing with each other for a weekend's span. Body Sacred began Fall of 1993 as a loose, nameless, ecumenical gathering of religious activists called together to think about what kind of group could help heal sex and spirit splits in our world.

Invited because of my work helping people understand bisexuality, I and several other bi activists listened in awe on that closing day six years ago when a handful of elder heterosexual church leaders told the conference how much they wanted to learn from the queer movement's political organizing and coming out models. They thought the newly-budding national polyamory movement could take a lot of cues from the LGBT movement and needed to link with us strongly. Heartened, I made a commitment that weekend to do more of my sex activism with the polyamory movement and spiritual radicals. In the years 1993 to 1999, these commitments have enriched my bisexual activism, my sex education teaching, and my heart, in many ways.

The Body Sacred celebrants gather each year at Kirkridge, a church retreat center founded earlier this century by Christian progressives. The center's simple buildings hug

a Delaware Valley ridge just east of Harrisburg; a breathtakingly beautiful site of green-treed vistas and wide swaths of purple-flowered hillsides facing Three Mile Island on the far horizon. TMI's three white towers stand like sentinels across the valley from Kirkridge, their winking lights stark silent reminder of that day two decades ago when the reactor core almost melted and "We All Live in Harrisburg" became a generation's lament.

The Body Sacred's perennial

emergence on this landscape evokes "Brigadoon" for me, that mythic, magic Scottish town which rises out of the mist one day each century, its people bound to awaken only during those times, due to an ancient curse.

Coming back to Kirkridge now, six years after The Body Sacred's founding, (when I fought hard to keep "Body" in the name of the group, against conservative opposition that it sounded too "earthy" or "dirty"), I'm struck again by that strange cliff-edge we still face—things still may explode if we do not change our culture's sex/spirit split and the massive violence TMI holds for the sacred body of our earth. Yet this is mingled with the heady potential and opportunities crisis brings, and a new sense of hope that maybe we can bring sex-positive spiritual communities back and help them thrive, if only by beginning several days each year.

The Body Sacred was created by people who wanted to spread its energy by word-of-mouth and through circles of sex and spirit, friend to friend (as opposed to mass advertising). It was created to attract a certain sort of person who has already done some personal work on their own sexuality and spirituality and is on the road to putting them together and needs like-minded people to accelerate the process. It is "an ecumenical volunteer educational association interested in assisting networking, dialogue and

**"We are more than one
We are more than two
We are more than
the sum of our parts
We cherish the old
and rejoice in the new
And we meet in the circle
of our hearts."**

—chorus, Ravenheart family song
by Liza Gabriel Ravenheart

community-building among those interested in the relationship between sex and spirit; and to witness, collect information, and comment upon the relationship of sexuality and spirituality as it evolves in our changing world."

The Body Sacred's coordinator for the past three years was the amazing Liza Gabriel Ravenheart, a member of the five-person Ravenheart family from northern California. They live with three other erotically bonded extended family members. Liza is also last year's vice president of Church of All Worlds (CAW), one of the oldest neo-pagan groups in this country.

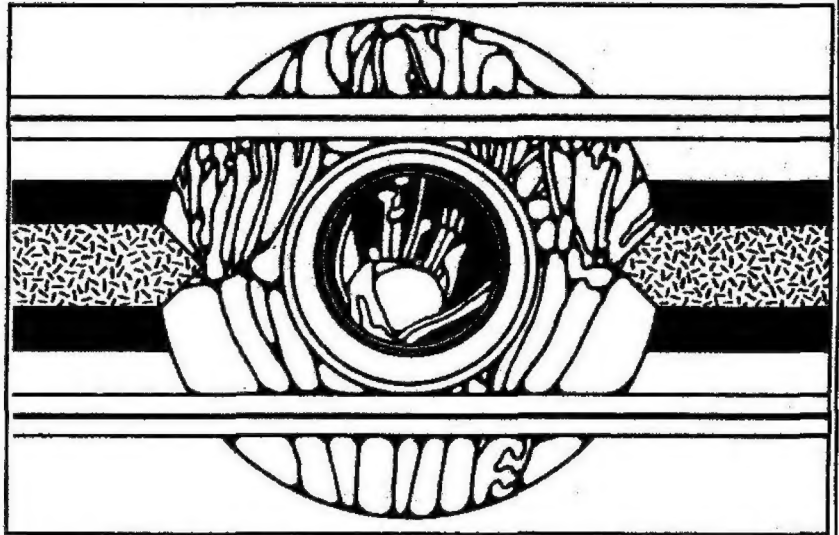
Liza and the rest of The Body Sacred planning committee created an exquisite vessel for this year's 1999 gathering, governed by what she calls "the open boundaries of erotic space," and sealed with an covenant between all that what takes place there stays there (in terms of names and experiences beyond one's own), and that erotic energy and intense body and spirit explorations, including nudity, are welcomed and encouraged.

With this the group consents as a whole that expressions among us will remain this side of genital, this side of orgasm; poised on that sweet edge, respecting and working with the aroused energy of sex and spirit merged, for all it's worth. (Of course, what one does with oneself or others on one's own time, between sessions, is entirely up to you. Your joyous reverent connection to life is praised in each and every introductory rap and teaching exercise and you're surrounded by loving energy, beautiful nature and delicious food all weekend.

Making this group-wide genital/orgasm boundary has an interesting effect - it creates safety for people along a wide range of comfort levels and encourages intimate communication and transformation that might not otherwise take place, if sex were rushed into too precipitously or the body left too swiftly for meditative trance on other planes.

I loved the way we were encouraged to play joyously with our sexual/chi/life energy together in a spirit of trust and connection. Each session started with dancing; the music an eclectic mix of partying and trance-like world sounds, people aged 20-70 naked or half-clothed, moving in and out of rhythm waves, unwinding, stretching, shaking out. The first day we made a HeartWheel - two circles, inner and outer, facing, sharing deep eye contact with each person in turn. "This person in front of you has come to represent The Body Sacred...look at them with gratitude..."

The rest of the weekend's activities were heavily concentrated on massage exchanges, breathwork, periodic check-in sharing times in small "family (support) groups," and one afternoon devoted to workshops - both experiential and discussion. The leaders managed to get through the entire weekend



without invoking any one tradition's set of deities or values, continually validating a variety of paths and encouraging people to find what works for them and to pursue it.

The Body Sacred participants are about half new and half return-celebrants. Each year the group is different but with continuity threads that keep the spirit moving along certain sure lines. When I walked into the first night's dance and saw several people already naked and sweaty, kicking up a musical group storm, I knew the level of comfort with nudity had changed since six years ago when none of us knew if it were permissible or not. This year there was more cheerful chaos, a mad medley of clothed and unclothed, scarved and costumed creatures. "This first day is more where we got to after four days, several years ago," I heard someone say, verifying my assumption that the group's thriving is in and of itself speeding up some of the intimacy and risk-taking allowed.

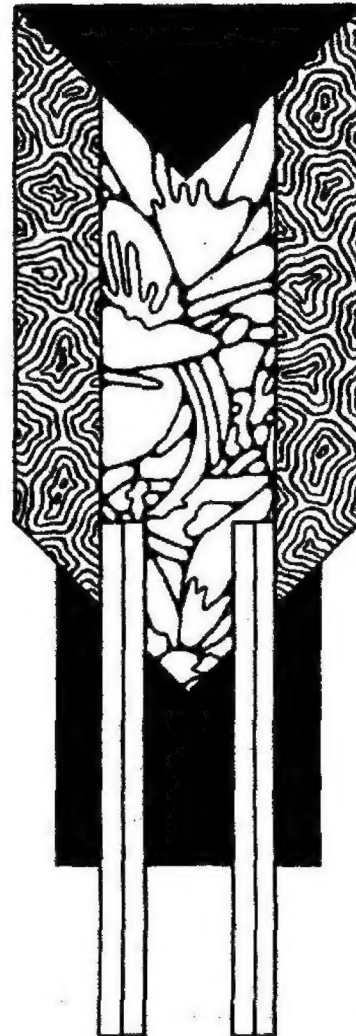
Having been absent for the group's development over the past five years and after co-leading a bisexuality workshop at that first gathering in 1993, I notice other changes too. There is much more of an easy relaxed acceptance of various sexualities, among men as well as women. There is much more of an acceptance of paganism as a valid spiritual path. And there is much more wild dancing. Some of the church elders are gone, though I feel their blessing for us still. And, I'd like to see this Body Sacred spirit move more into the churches and synagogues and mosques, not just the pagan community too.

There seems to be this tribal need now to merge and cling and process to points of release. As Liza says in an Intimate Explosion newsletter, "What I feel emerging is a web with many centers of power and many viewpoints and approaches." There are community efforts like Body Sacred happening in an increasing variety of geographic areas. Liza writes about Celebrations of Sexuality and Spirituality in the San Francisco Bay Area, as well as The Body Sacred in Pennsylvania, but there are other groups I have heard about in Seattle, in Atlanta, in New York State, in Tennessee.

The Body Sacred itself is moving in several different directions and it remains to be seen where it will most focus or flow. I participated in several discussions there about its future. A Body Sacred VII and VIII are planned for Spring 2000 and for Spring 2001, and there are a variety of opinions about how it should grow. In addition to The Body Sacred Weekend, which will continue, people talked about wanting to convene a summit of sacred sex leaders - for exchange and collaboration, as well as wanting to offer more structured leadership training to help more people become sex and spirit teachers themselves.

There is also some interest in becoming a political, advocacy lobby for sex and spirit in our society. As Liza says in her article, "In my daily life I am meeting and sharing love and connection with many powerful souls, more all the time. People who are emerging into an experience of sexuality and spirituality that is deeply personal . . . What I feel emerging is love, trust, recognition, compassion, consensus and cooperation. I feel I have a family. Some of them I may never even meet, yet we are swimming in the same stream. We are living the same dream."

To find out more about The Body Sacred and its West Coast sister group, Millennial Connections, sponsors of The Celebration of Sacred Sexuality, visit their website (<http://sacredsexuality.org>). This summer, Liza and other members passed the mantle of coordinator of The Body Sacred to Carol Schoenleber. You can reach her at cschoeny@snip.net. "The Intimate Explosion" newsletter's email address is AniColt@aol.com.



BiNet Ft. Lauderdale Starts in South Florida

by Michael Page

The Coffee Club, Inc. is the proud sponsor of a new concept in bi community building. BiNet Ft. Lauderdale is a fully functioning group beneath the wings of BiNet USA. This means we will have not-for-profit tax exempt 501C status. In English, this means we will now be able to raise money (tax deductible) for our group with a mere 2% to 5% administration fee collected by BiNet USA. Potential grant money can be used as seen fit by BiNet Ft. Lauderdale. Bi visibility and bi education projects are just a few of the endless possibilities we will be capable of producing.

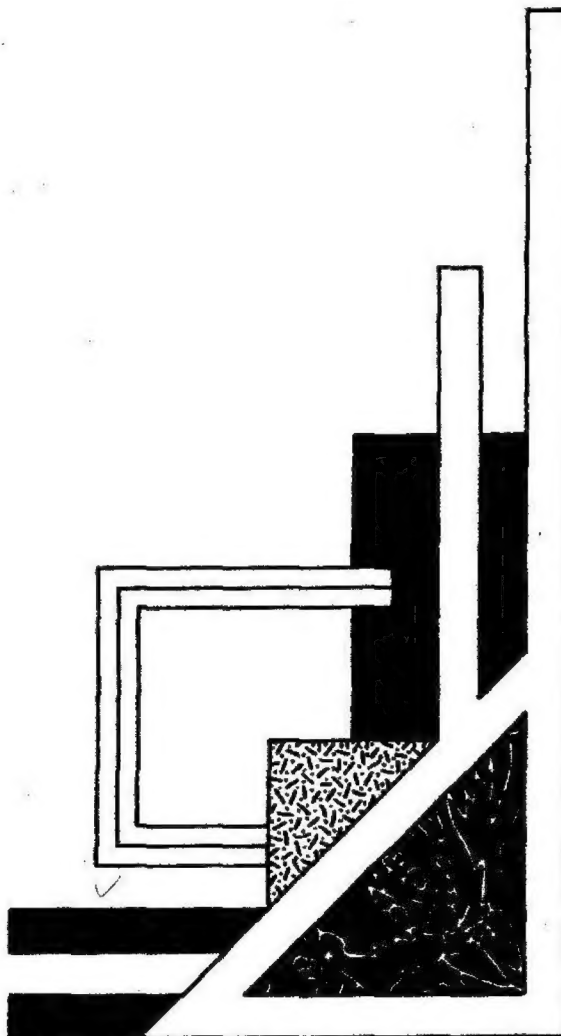
It is my opinion, that amidst the current climate of "Bi Inclusion," we have untapped sums of dollars available for promoting the BiNet USA Mission Statement. Many fabulous organizations in the Country are using the term GLBT. Even Barney Frank was getting it down at EBAH in Tallahassee! This is a glowing testament to the effectiveness of BiNet USA and the tough Political Activism being carried out by present and former leaders.

My fresh approach to Bi Community building evolved out of my own frustration with our now transformed "Bi Support Group." Our group was generously started by, "Rich" two years ago. Brief History: He came out bi to his wife and she could not deal with it. Divorce left him melancholy and in need of support himself. Luckily for me, I never needed support regarding my sexual orientation.

This group often left me feeling uncomfortable because there were many people there in need of professional help. So many times, in my opinion, bisexuality was simply a factor, but not the core issue. Unfortunately, it was the only group for bi people in all of South Florida as the "Discussion Group" in Miami dissolved. If it were not for the caring contribution of "Hugh", the Gay & Lesbian Community Center would have terminated our space completely. Hugh endured nights of low attendance in hopes of something coming along.

I received a phone call from one of the volunteers at the Center and was asked if I was willing to facilitate the group. I accepted. With much thought, I determined that Bi Community building is of primary importance. I plan to start a "Bi Community Building List". The list will simply contain contact information and a check marked list of the bi activities of interest for each participant. So often, folks show up at our group and are never seen or heard from again. Hopefully this will enable us to promote a more diverse and social climate for South Florida Bi Community.

The new group will provide a space for bi's to commune and casually talk with fellow bi's two nights a month. An ever increasing "Bi Community Building List Number" will be up on the wall for all to see. Anyone "On" the list will have "access" to it.



Tri-State Report

There has been lots of planning and activity in the Tri-State region since July's National Meeting in Phoenix, AZ. Regional Organizers Alice Leibowitz and Robin Renee have been working on creating bi community on a more region-wide, concerted basis. Together, Robin and Alice have been organizing events and developing ways to increase communication among bisexuals in the Tri-State region.

The BiNet USA Open Survey was recently developed by the two in order to find out how BiNet USA can best serve its members. It was designed to draw a clear picture of the greatest needs and interests of bisexuals in the region. Its goal is to help foster understanding and communication between Regional Organizers and the bi community, members of BiNet USA and non-members alike. Anyone who has an interest in bisexual issues is urged to take the survey.

In Connecticut, Alice plans to attend an upcoming meeting of the Connecticut Women's Bisexual Network. Her intention is to build a foundation for connection between Conn-Bi-Nation, the local organization to which she belongs, and the women's network. BiNet New Jersey continues to keep busy with regular support groups plus its popular summer activities including a beach party and a barbecue (BiBQ). The group will participate in Hyacinth Foundation's AIDS Walk on Sunday, September 26th.

Some entertaining Celebrate Bisexuality Day (September 23rd) plans are being made in the Tri-State Region. In both Connecticut and New Jersey, bi people will be gathering at rather mainstream establishments to dine and party with Happy Celebrate Bisexuality Day cake for dessert. Maybe even the waitstaff will sing!

New National Bisexual Organization Forms

A coalition of bisexual activists is pleased to announce the formation of a new national organization called Bi Without Borders. We exist to serve bisexuals, bisensual people, and two-spirited people and their friends and families from all walks of life. It is our goal to help bi people and their friends make connections with like-minded individuals, and to support local and regional organizations in doing the same.

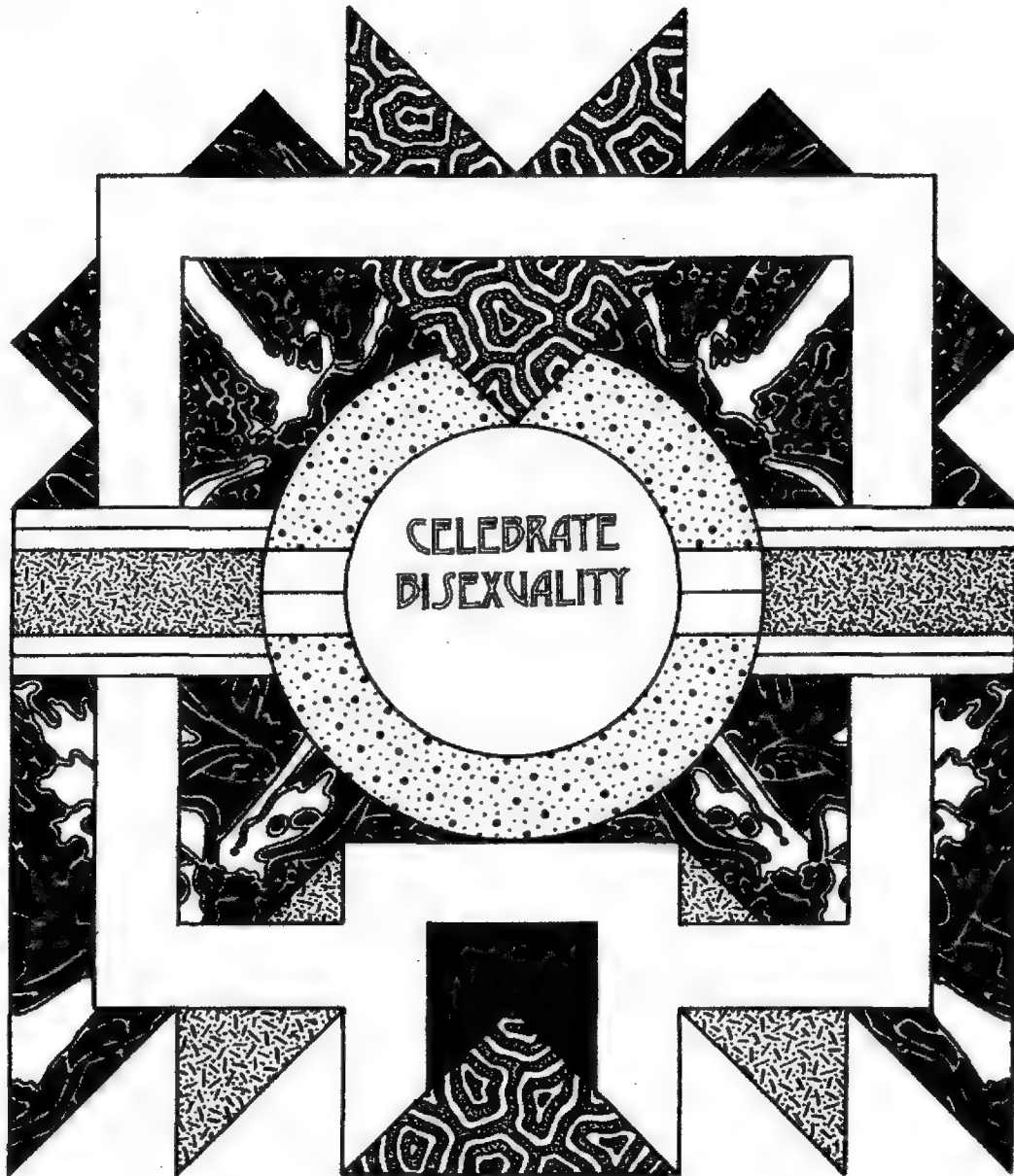
Bi Without Borders opened its doors formally on June 26, 1999 and already has members from around the country as well as Australia and other international locations. While we are currently focused on the United States for our political work, we actively support multinational activism and are international in our networking and membership.

We are pleased to present the following projects aimed at connecting and supporting bi people:

1. The Travel Network
2. TOO BAAD (Transpeople, Others, and Omnipresent Bisexuals Allied Against Defamation)
3. Resource Information for bi people and their friends
4. Technical assistance for local and regional organizations

Membership is open to anyone who wishes to be part of a bi-friendly group, whether you use the term "bisexual" to describe yourself or not. For more information or details, contact Media Coordinator Tamara Froome at (612) 870-2587 or biwithoutborders@coolmail.com or visit our mini-web site at: <http://www.bisexual.org/biwithoutborders>. Or write to Bi Without Borders, P.O. Box 581037, Minneapolis, MN 55458.





Deb Kolodny: Blessed Bi Spirit

by Ann Schranz

At the BiNet USA annual meeting in Phoenix, BiNet honored Deb Kolodny for her dedication to furthering civil rights for bisexuals and for others. For over 20 years, she has been a volunteer and professional activist in the faith, labor, social justice, women's, and LGBT communities.

During this time, Deb served two terms as a National Coordinator for BiNet USA, founded several bisexual groups, published over a dozen articles, trained hundreds on bisexuality, and co-led the DC BiNetwork and the DC Alliance for Multicultural Bisexuals. She represents BiNet USA at the NGLTF National Policy Roundtable and presides as facilitator of the NGLTF/Equal Partners in Faith Religious Leadership Roundtable. Early next year, Continuum Press will publish an anthology she edited whose working title is "Blessed Bi Spirit: Bisexual People of Faith."

Amanda Udis Kessler began the book project, and she handed it over to Deb about one year ago. Deb says, "Editing this anthology has provided an incredibly intimate window into the lives and souls of contributors, who write of profound insights and growth." How are spirituality and bisexuality related for her? "To stand in the "both/and" regarding who I can love made it very easy to understand there is no dichotomy between immanence and transcendence," Deb says.

"Part of my path is to live in that intersection. It seems like an innate part of my being that is also reflected in my bisexuality."

Deb continues, "Judaism says we are created in the image of God and it understands God to include both male and female and more. If both of these are true, then our spirit selves are perhaps intersexed. As Judaism opens the door for understanding the complexity of gender, bisexuality allows me to live into that complexity." As one who believes in reincarnation, she believes she has had anatomically male bodies

"As Judaism opens the door for understanding the complexity of gender, bisexuality allows me to live into that complexity."

before and anatomically female bodies before. "Our external genitalia and our hormones are a small piece of who we are. The soul lives beyond gender," says Deb. "How can bisexuality not be one of the glorious possibilities?" she wonders. Deb also thinks about spirituality in terms of principles like wholeness, balance, fluidity, and free will/destiny/fate. In living out her bisexuality, she feels like she maximizes the possibilities of living into all of these.

As Deb moves forward, she is very clear that she wants to integrate more fully her spiritual life, her political work, and her professional work. She has been using her professional facilitation skills at developing BiNet USA as a volunteer, where she has done organizational development, leadership building, and conflict

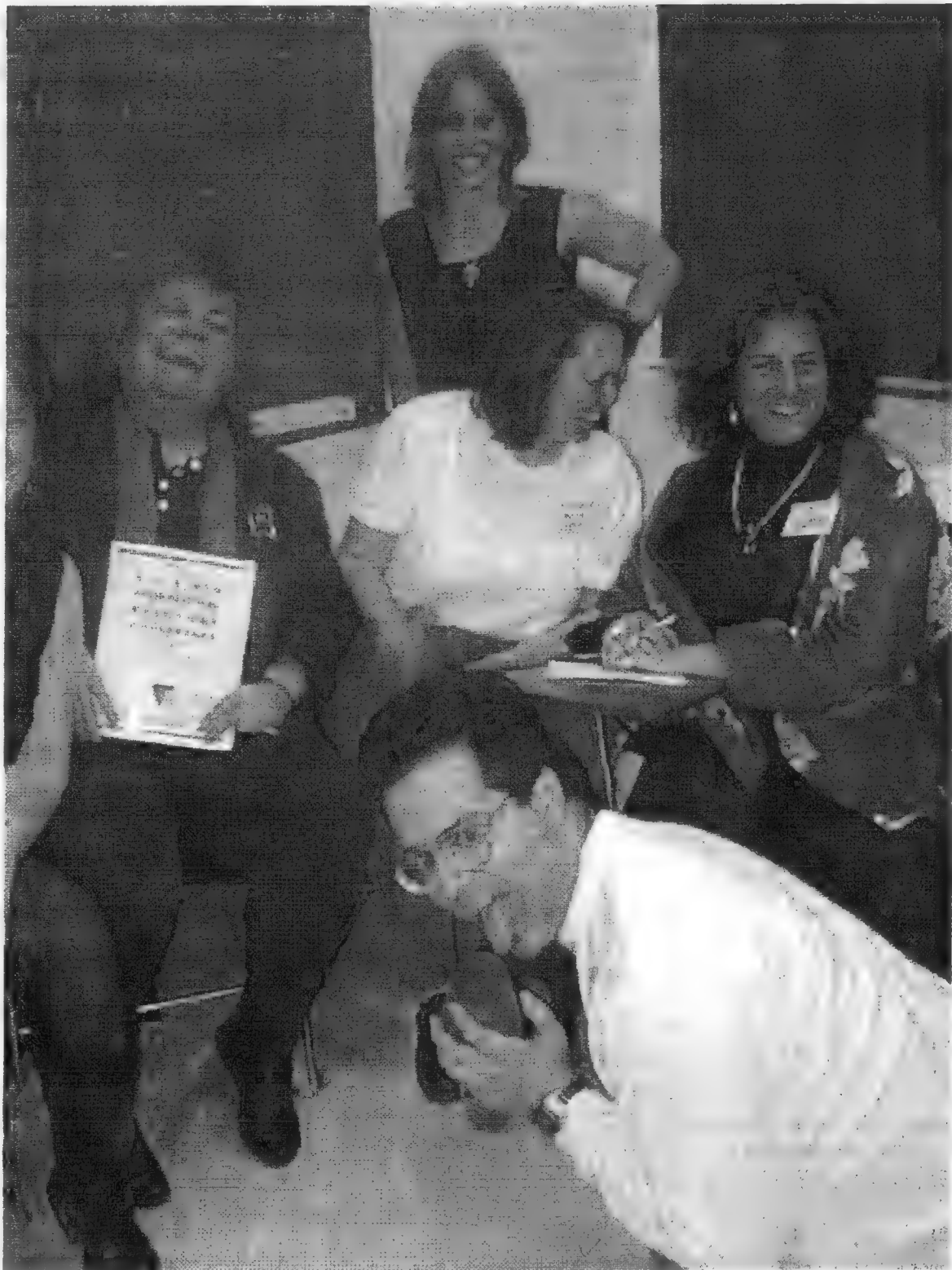
resolution. She wants to do this work in progressive communities of faith, particularly ones doing political work. Deb's vision is to find ways to make more powerful the voice of progressive people of faith in political life. One way she is doing this is with the Religious Leadership Roundtable. This group works to shift the public dialogue on LGBT peoples, so that folks "in the middle" have another religious voice to listen to besides that of the religious Right.

Deb has been involved with BiNet since 1992, through its most activist phase. "BiNet has made a

huge impact on the world," she says, "although most of the impact has been in the LGBT community, and we have much opportunity for work with organizations like NOW and other non-

LGBT groups." The occasional strife within BiNet USA should be understood against the backdrop of dramatic positive changes in the last seven years, Deb says. "For me, it has always been worth it to deal with the strife because of the impact BiNet has made."

When asked what priorities BiNet should have for the coming year, she responds, "We need to focus on getting funding for a half-time staff person to deal with administrative matters. Then volunteer activists could do more high visibility, high impact, fun, and exciting things." As someone who has been such a committed leader and is stepping back, she felt very energized by the annual meeting in Phoenix. "We have the deepest, broadest and most talented group of leaders we've ever had. I'm very impressed and very excited."



**Tom Limoncelli shows a little respect to Deb Kolodny.
Lani Ka'ahumanu, Robyn Ochs, and Kerry Lobel approve.**

Celebrate Bisexuality Day

by Wayne Bryant
and Tim Turner

On Thursday, September 23rd, Boston area bisexuals joined with others around the globe to inaugurate International Celebrate Bisexuality Day. The Bisexual Resource Center (BRC) presented awards to five "Unsung Activists", including one of the founders of International Celebrate Bisexuality Day.

The first annual International Celebrate Bisexuality Day brought bisexuals together with their friends, families, and allies to recognize and honor their history, community, and diverse cultures, as well as the considerable contributions made by bisexuals from every walk of life.

The event in Boston was co-sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center and Fenway Community Health Center. Also joining in the celebration was the Boston Bisexual Women's Network (BBWN). Organized in 1983, the BBWN is the oldest extant bisexual organization in Massachusetts and one of the first in the world. Biversity, Boston's mixed-gender social group for bisexuals, was also represented at the event.

Wendy Curry is one of three originators of International Celebrate Bisexuality Day. In addition to her role as National Coordinator for BiNet USA, she is also the former editor-in-chief of BiNet News and the Western

Massachusetts editor for the Bisexual Resource Guide 2000. Wendy is the creator of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network web site and of the international Bi Press email list.

Not all activism is done in the spotlight; in fact, most of the work is done by dedicated activists like John Vines. He has been a constant and inspiring volunteer at dozens of events in the Boston area bisexual community, as well as at the Boston Living Center. John was one of the tireless emcees at the 5th International Bisexual Conference and his is the voice that has been heard on the Bisexual Resource Center voicemail for the last several years.

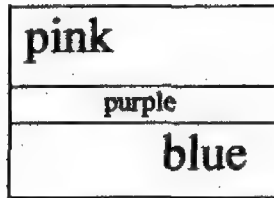
Lisa Sheehy has also worked on dozens of bi events over the years. She has served the BRC as founder and organizer of the Coming Out As Bisexual discussion group, as coordinator for the BRC's joint project with the Multicultural AIDS Coalition, and as Spanish language translator and trouble shooter for the 5th International Bisexual Conference. Lisa was also an organizer and presenter for the Conference On Bisexuality and HIV Prevention held this past June.

Maria Christina Blanco is the Co-founder of the Bisexual People of Color group. Tina was the BRC's youngest board member and its youngest officer when she served as Treasurer. She was also treasurer for the 5th International Bisexual Conference. In June, Tina was an organizer and presenter for the Conference On Bisexuality and HIV.

Pete Chvany is author of the Fence Posts column which appears in various Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual newspapers around the country. He organized and presented the only bisexual presence at this year's Gay Men's Health Summit. Pete was an organizer and presenter for the Conference On Bisexuality and HIV and he will be presenting on bisexuality and HIV at the Creating Change conference later this year. Facilities scouting for the 5th International Bisexual Conference at Harvard University was done by a team of which he was a part. Pete is a content contributor and editor for the BRC web site.

Celebrate Bisexuality Day is the brainchild of three activists who wanted to challenge the pervasive and wrongheaded notion that any one of us can be defined by the gender of our partner. "Ever since the Stonewall rebellion, the gay and lesbian community has grown in strength and visibility. The bisexual community also has grown in strength but in many ways we are still invisible. I too have been conditioned by society to automatically label a couple walking hand in hand as either straight or gay, depending upon the perceived gender of each person," remarked Texas bi/trans activist Gigi Raven Wilbur.

Tired of the heterosexual AND the homosexual assumptions, BiNet USA's Wendy Curry of Maine, Michael Page of Florida and Gigi put their heads together (in cyberspace) and came up with the idea of putting bisexuality on the map. The idea took off in cyberspace, and now people from Australia to South Africa, from New Zealand to Sweden, and from Germany to Japan planned events.



“The Bi Pride Flag!”

The Bi Pride Flag (public domain) was unveiled on December 5th of 1998 and has made appearances in the United States, Australia, India, Africa, South America and beyond...

Thanks to a grant from the American Institute of Bisexuality, 5' x 3' flags (no limit) may be obtained for any and all established Bi Groups or GLBT Organizations at 10.00 each (retail is 30.00). Offer expires Dec. 31, 1999.

Individuals wishing to purchase the flag may order by phone or online at <http://www.bicafe.com/bimart> . Call Michael Page at (888) 256-2704 before placing the order and receive 5.00 off retail.



“The BiCafe!”

Due by the end of September, re-created BiCafe will bring you the best personals service on the Internet! The best hetero, gay/lesbian, and alternative personals sites have been thoroughly examined. Our new site goes beyond not only “finding your match” but allowing you to easily find other bisexuals interested in Bi Community Building and Political Organizing.

All potential New BiCafe Members, will be given a choice of Bi Organizations they would like to belong to. A one-year membership will be sponsored by The Coffee Club, Inc., parent company of BiCafe, BiMart and BiDreams.

All adult erotic content will be moved to a new web site named BiDreams. All BiCafe members have free seamless access to BiDreams.

Easy Sign up process at <http://www.bicafe.com>

BiNet USA Open Survey

BiNet USA is the first and largest national bisexual organization in the United States. Please take a few moments to answer this survey if you are a member of BiNet USA, are bisexual, bi-curious, bi-friendly, or have an interest in bisexual issues. The more we understand you, the more we can help develop and strengthen our Bisexual communities.

1. Which of the following functions do you feel are most important in a bisexual organization?

(Check all that apply.)

- a. ☐ creating social space
 - b. ☐ political activism
 - c. ☐ outreach to the lesbian/gay communities
 - d. ☐ outreach to the straight communities
 - e. ☐ support groups
 - f. ☐ bisexual visibility
 - g. ☐ presence at Pride events
 - h. ☐ creating bisexual culture
 - i. ☐ Internet presence
 - j. ☐ sponsoring events
 - k. ☐ providing access to news and information on bisexuals and bisexuality
 - l. ☐ education and consciousness-raising
 - m. ☐ alliance with other sexuality and/or gender-based organizations
 - n. ☐ alliance with other progressive movements
- Which movements?

o. ☐ other _____

2. What are the top three most important functions in a bisexual organization?

(Choose letters from question 1.)

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐

3. Are you a member of BiNet USA? yes ☐ no ☐

4. How did you hear about BiNet USA?

- a. ☐ from a BiNet USA organizer
- b. ☐ flyer
- c. ☐ Internet
- d. ☐ word-of-mouth
- e. ☐ this survey
- f. ☐ newspaper article
- g. ☐ TV/radio
- h. ☐ at an LGBT event
- i. ☐ from another organization
- j. ☐ other (please describe)

The mission of BiNet USA is to collect and distribute information regarding bisexuality; to facilitate the development of bisexual community and visibility; to work for the equal rights and liberation of bisexuals and all oppressed people; and to eradicate all forms of oppression inside and outside the bisexual community. We are committed to being affirmatively inclusive of a multicultural constituency and political agenda.

5. Here are some of the ways BiNet USA has worked to fulfill this mission:

- a. sponsoring regional meetings, retreats, or conferences
- b. electing National Coordinators and Regional Organizers
- c. helping to start new local Bisexual groups
- d. providing resources and information to local Bisexual groups
- e. outreach to rural areas/Rural Initiative
- f. outreach to youth/Youth Initiative
- g. HIV/AIDS Initiative
- h. media/visibility
- i. working with other LGBT organizations/Ally Campaign
- j. publishing BiNet News
- k. website/Technology Resource Initiative
- l. BiNet USA presence at other conferences/Conference Visi-bi-lity Project
- m. public speaking

What are the three most important ways BiNet USA can work toward its mission?

(Choose letters from #5 or write in "other.")

1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____ other ____

Why? _____

6. Have you attended a BiNet USA regional meeting, retreat, or conference? yes ____ no ____

If yes, in which region(s)?

- a. ____ Northeast (Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont)
- b. ____ Tri-State (Connecticut, New Jersey, New York)
- c. ____ Mid-Atlantic (District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia)
- d. ____ Southeast (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virgin Islands)
- e. ____ Midwest (Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota)
- f. ____ Central (Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio)
- g. ____ South Central (Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas)
- h. ____ Southwest (Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah)
- i. ____ Northwest (Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Washington, Wyoming)
- j. ____ Pacific Coast (California, Guam, Hawaii)

What was your overall experience?

If you have not attended an annual meeting, why not?

7. What are BiNet USA's greatest strengths?

8. In what ways can BiNet USA improve?

9. BiNet USA leaders can best keep in contact with its membership through:

(Please check one.)

- a. ____ newsletters
- b. ____ regional meetings, retreats, or conferences
- c. ____ surveys
- d. ____ website/e-mail
- e. ____ other _____

10. The most important issue facing bisexuals today is

11. Comments:

Additional Information (optional)

12. Sex M F
 Transsexual/Transgendered

Other (please describe)

13. Age

14. Sexual/Affectional Orientation :

- a. Bisexual
- b. Queer
- c. Lesbian
- d. Gay
- e. Heterosexual
- f. Other

15. Relationship Status (Check all that apply.)

- a. single
- b. partnered
- c. married
- d. polyamorous
- e. monogamous
- f. separated
- g. divorced
- h. dating/casual
- i. other

16. Race/Ethnic Background

- a. Asian/Pacific Islander
- b. African American/Black
- c. Caucasian/White
- d. Hispanic/Latino(a)
- e. Native American
- f. other

Please let us know how we can reach you if you would like more information on BiNet USA:

Is discretion necessary? yes no

Send survey to BiNet USA, 4201 Wilson Boulevard
 #110-311, Arlington, VA 22203-1859.

ILGA, Pride & Mardi Gras: Report from South Africa

by Lynn Dobbs

The 10th annual Pride march and the very first ever Mardi Gras festival was held in Johannesburg on September 25. It more resembled a demonstration/march than a parade. There was certainly an air of celebration around the event, though.

The festival was interestingly different than anything I have previously witnessed. For one thing, there were very, very few vendors of tacky-tacky and knick-knacks. I think there were about eight vendors. But most of the gay bars within 200k had a tent venue! If one wanted to party with whatever booze to whatever music, it was available.

The event started with a kick ass opening pep talk and entertainment. The International Gay and Lesbian Association (ILGA) was highlighted several times in different people's speeches. The 19th annual ILGA world conference took place the previous week. Then we marched for about 3.5 km until we came to an intersection that has been named for Simon Nkoli. We had a few minutes of ceremony at that intersection then marched 3.5 km back to the starting place. Whew! What a long, long way to go on these old and tired hips! It was interesting to have the march start and stop at the same place.

The AIDS memorial break in the middle of the march had 10 folks on the top floor of an eight story building all holding blazing red flares. There was also a four or five story vertical banner for Simon. Simon died of AIDS complications last November. He was a key player in South African politics/revolution. His involvement with the African National Conference was instrumental in having gay and lesbian protections in the SA constitution. (A point of pride from this source: in 1994, we managed to get him as the grand marshal of our pride in San Diego!)

In many respects the pride celebration and the gay/lesbian/bi/trans identity around the world is very similar. The rest of the world seems to have adopted the symbols of queer identity born in the U.S. after Stonewall. (Continued on page 21)

Bisexuality Rap at Delaware Valley Synergy

by Robin Renee

On Friday, August 13th, Regional Organizer Robin Renee attended a "Bisexuality Rap" at a meeting of Delaware Valley Synergy in Bensalem, PA. Founded in the 1970's, Delaware Valley Synergy (DVS) is a social club supporting open relationships. The club holds events ranging from hiking, movie nights, dinner dances, men's and women's rap groups, to both sexually permissive and non-permissive house parties. This well-attended "Bisexuality Rap" was only the second official discussion of its kind for DVS.

The two-hour discussion raised many of the basic and important questions for people beginning to think about bisexuality: What is the definition of bisexuality? Does one have to "act it out" in order to be bisexual, or is it a potential or capacity? Is bisexuality (or any sexuality, for that matter), nature or nurture? What are the reasons for coming out as bisexual? How equally must one be attracted to both men and women in order to identify as bisexual? Robin provided BiNet USA flyers, membership forms, and the newly-created BiNet USA Open Survey. Some of the information used to inspire thought and participation was printed from the BiNet USA website by one of the DVS facilitators.

The outcome of this second DVS "Bisexuality Rap" (the first occurred about two years ago) seemed wholly positive. Several of the DVS members present discussed their bisexual or bi-curious feelings openly, with at least one person feeling courageous enough to come out to the group for the first time. Some members talked about the DVS Statement of Ethics which says that there should be no discrimination among members based on many factors including sexual preference. Some felt that the largely heterosexual group had not lived up to that ideal in the past. There was a resolve in the room to facilitate the evolution of DVS to be in line with its mission. An immediate action was taken: The first DVS party, which explicitly welcomes bisexuality, was scheduled for November of this year. DVS appears committed to continuing its open dialogue on bisexuality and welcomes new members from in and around the Delaware Valley. They can be reached at (215) 639-0538 or DVSynergy@aol.com.



The Best \$10 Your Group Ever Spent

Fritz Klein agreed to fund (by a grant) half the cost of as many 5' x 3' BiPride Flags we can sell to groups, as long as they pay the second half. The retail price is \$15.00 each. Michael Page will pick up \$5.00 (shipping/ handling), so the actual cost to the group for a \$30.00 flag is only \$10.00!

Now all we have to do is get the word out. If your group is interested, please contact Michael Page at (888) 256-2704.

There is also a new Transgender Pride flag in the design stage. Contact Monica at bitg@webtv.net for more information.

Creating Change '99 to Teach Activists How to Win an Election

Political organizing will take center stage as more than 2,000 activists gather in Oakland November 10 - 14 for the 12th annual Creating Change conference, the largest annual conference of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (GLBT) movement.

This year's conference, to take place at the Oakland Marriott City Center, will include some 120 workshops and trainings on such diverse topics as religion, racism, philanthropy and social change, youth and aging issues, sexual liberation and gender identity, cyber organizing and men's health and culture.

But with the GLBT community heading into a pivotal election year and the Knight Initiative on the March 2000 California ballot, more emphasis than ever before will be placed on political organizing and winning elections.

"For many years, from local city halls to state houses to Congress, we have organized for equality and we have won many victories," said NGLTF Executive Director Kerry Lobel. "But thirty-nine states still do not recognize GLBT civil rights. Twenty-eight states still do not have strong hate crimes laws. And the struggle for recognition for our families and our committed relationships remains arduous, as the anti-gay Knight Initiative teaches us. We must realize that our campaign for equality is a marathon, not a sprint. Creating Change will give us the nourishment and energy to keep going."

This year's Creating Change will offer three sessions devoted to electoral training:

* "Defeat the Anti-Gay Knight Initiative," a pre-conference institute scheduled for all day Thursday, November 11. This institute will focus on how to do door-to-door campaigning and to launch a large-scale electoral canvassing effort. This institute precedes the Creating Change conference and requires an additional registration fee.

* "Door-to-Door Campaigning Against the Knight Initiative," scheduled from 6 - 10 p.m. Friday, November 12. Several hundred activists will take to the streets of Oakland for four hours to knock on doors and identify opponents of the Knight Initiative.

* "How To Win an Election," scheduled from 9 - 11 a.m. Saturday, November 13. This workshop will examine the fundamentals of a political campaign, how the parts fit together and how to achieve success without compromising political principles.

Together, the electoral skills seminars are designed to elevate the political skills of GLBT activists, but also to teach the effectiveness of local organizing, explained NGLTF Political Director Rebecca Isaacs. "The way we will beat right-wing extremists and put an end to anti-gay ballot measures is to overcome our fear of engaging fair-minded, undecided voters in one-on-one conversation," Isaacs explained.

The annual Creating Change conference has resulted in the launching of many significant new projects and initiatives, including the launch of Boycott Colorado in 1992; the 1993 "youth uprising" in Durham, the Federation of LGBT Statewide Political Groups and the kickoff of Equality Begins at Home, the historic campaign that witnessed 350 rallies and other events in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico during a one-week period in March.

This year's Creating Change is sponsored with the help of Pacific Bell, Wells Fargo Foundation, the Advocate, and BREATHE - The California Smoke-Free Bar Program (a statewide project of the American Lung Association). American Airlines is the official carrier for Creating Change.

To register or learn how to get involved with Creating Change, please call 202-332-6483, ext. 3329 or visit www.creatingchange.org. Journalists wanting to obtain media credentials should fax a letter stating their request to David Elliot at 202-332-0207 or email deliot@nglft.org.

**Check the BiNet USA web site
for details on the BiNet USA
fundraiser that will coincide
with Creating Change.**

(South Africa Report continued from page 18)

In fact, Stonewall seems to be the rallying point in most cultures that have a tie to "western" culture. It has been (and always is) interesting to actually talk to local representatives of world conferences to find the actual differences in queer culture.

At the ILGA conference, the Sydney (Australia) Lesbian and Gay Mardi Gras applied for membership and was one of the new member applications voted on in the first plenary. Jan Hansen of San Diego BiPol raised an objection based on Mardi Gras' blatant sexual orientation discrimination against bisexuals. Their application was referred to a workshop for resolution. The bisexuals at the workshop (majority of participants) decided that ILGA would have a greater influence over Mardi Gras if they were a member. The workshop reported to the next plenary and a resolution was passed to accept Mardi Gras as a full member but that Mardi Gras would have to deal with the bisexual discrimination at the earliest opportunity. The censure was strongly worded.

Bisexuals have had quite a bit of visibility at the World Conference. Two workshops on bisexuality -- one by San Diego BiPol and the other by Alejandra Sarda of Argentina. Alejandra conducted a Bi 101 workshop. The BiPol workshop was called "Beyond Bisexuality -- when behavior and identity don't match."

As one of the Secretaries General, Jennifer Wilson had several opportunities to address the plenaries. She continued to NOT say bisexual or transgender when talking about the work of ILGA. Jan Hansen and others continually called her on the omission during her addresses. When we voted on new Secretaries General, she lost by a margin of 2-1 to Phumi Metetwa of South Africa, whose "campaign speech" had been stunningly inclusive.

The other (new) Secretary General, Kursad Kahramanoglu of the UK, was a bi enemy in ILGA as little as four years ago! He once told Jan Hansen that "bisexuality doesn't really exist." He later said that there were "probably many UNISON members who were behaviorally bi but would never identify that way." Jan said, "Not as long as you continue to make it difficult for

them to do so." He has, however, changed his attitude dramatically. He is a member of UNISON, a lesbian and gay organization within a trade union. He was the only male candidate nominated, so no vote was necessary.

The North American Region caucus met several times. The rules of ILGA "dictated" that regions submit names for regional representatives to the ILGA Executive Committee. We did. So the new NAR representatives to the EC are Harold Koodes of New York and Claudine Quellet of Quebec. They have been charged by the caucus with getting the word out about a meeting of ILGA members at Creating Change in Oakland. As a region, we must decide how we can support our members and how our members can support ILGA. We also have to work on a regional structure.

San Diego BiPol representatives present at the conference (Lynn Dobbs, Jan Hansen and Greg Davidson) took matters into our own hands and are voting the BiNet proxies. We felt it was important to increase the Bi Vote around Mardi Gras membership and around a couple of resolutions to be brought to the plenary concerning bi visibility in ILGA. The resolutions (in various forms) make it the policy of ILGA to always include bi and trans when speaking of the aims of ILGA. If the resolutions pass, I will send the complete wording. Because ILGA works by consensus when ever possible, no actual vote counting is happening, so having your proxy votes is mostly symbolic, but it does indicate bi participation at the World Conferences.

There was a remarkable level of support for bi and trans issues at this conference. I think the general trend to include bis and transgenders is accelerating. The gender outlaw workshop produced a proposal that the plenary voted for which stated: In order to be fully inclusive and to avoid "tokenism," ILGA staff and spokespersons should use the phrase "lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people" (which can be abbreviated as LGBT) or similar expressions in both spoken and written word, especially in official documents, press releases and the ILGA Bulletin, and when addressing conferences and international organizations, such as the United Nations and the Council of Europe. ILGA voted to have its next conference in Rome during the first week in July of 2000.

Insights on Celebrating Bisexuality Day

by Lani Ka'ahumanu

One early morning last March I startled myself awake from a dream already forgotten saying "Oh that's really important!" I went to my desk and rote — The rest of my life isn't as long as it used to be. I love the gift of these words. For the last 25 years I have been living one amazing adventure after another since I left the full time duties of being a suburban housewife and mother and came out as a lesbian mother and then bisexual. I was taken aback by the realization I've been so busy living my life it never occurred to me to frame the time I spend in such a way.

A reflective mood was born out of this awakening and I went into a cocoon mode last May after I tripped and fell — a full body splat — on the concrete island in the middle of the street as my forehead skidded in the fast lane. I quickly jumped up gathering the papers that had slipped out of the file I was carrying, crossed the street and took the few steps to my friend Melissa's apartment where I had been headed. I was thankful it was late at night and there was no traffic.

She tended to my scraped forehead and nurtured my overwhelmed and painful state. I was still reeling from an accident just two weeks earlier when the airport shuttle driver had slammed my right hand in the door before I had even sat down for the ride. As I sipped tea and talked with Melissa I felt fragile in a way I had never felt before. My sense of being invincible was shaken and in the weeks following I burrowed in to the safety of my cocoon.

Over the summer I immersed myself in my 1970s, 80s and 90s journals in an earnest attempt to focus on completing my book — *My Grassroots Are Showing*. I also accepted a surprising invitation to be a guest at the Old Lesbians Organizing for Change (OLOC) dinner as a local dignitary and acted on the opportunity to work on a documentary about the lives of Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin who began organizing lesbians in the 1950s during the McCarthy era.

The combination of cocooning, reading my journals, the invitation, working on the video and becoming friends with Joan E. Biren the director, and producer Dee Mosbacher caught me off guard. "Off guard" in the sense I didn't know I was so "on guard" until an uncontrollable wave of grief, anger, pain and release swept me away as I was writing an email thanking Joan and Dee for the wonderful time we had had. I told them I felt a deep healing taking place inside me, a coming home to my self of sorts. Unbeknownst to me until now I hadn't been in touch with my history including my lesbian coming out, activism, and cultural work since I came out bisexual.

Now many of you know I came out in the mid-70s rush of the women's movement and Helen Reddy's mainstream hit "I am woman hear me roar." I discovered my woman-loving self and reveled in a community that said "YES!" Like an excited child I jumped into the middle of every puddle around me. I've told the stories many times of how I chanted my way up Market Street arm-in-arm with other lesbian mothers in the 1976 Gay Pride March and was actively involved in organizing the Women Studies Program at San Francisco State. How I got myself to the first March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian rights in 1979, and wrote and performed with *Mother tongue Feminist Reader's Theater* at the underground women only coffeehouse.

The fact is I've been telling these stories for years without feeling a thing.

The lesbian feminist community was my inspiration and passion, my support system and lifeline, my family and home base — until I fell in love with Bill Mack in 1980. My woman-loving world crashed and

burned right before my eyes; and there I stood in the middle of the raging fire. A fire fed by many of the women with whom I had marched, organized and performed; many were women with whom I had shared my first coming out kisses and first women loving sexual explorations.

Coming out, as bisexual in the lesbian community in 1980 was devastating. I too had named women like me traitors and truly believed there was no such thing as a bisexual. On the one hand I was caught up in my own confusion and internalized biphobia, and on the other hand, I understood the sense of betrayal lesbians felt.

***"I didn't know I was so
"on guard" until an
uncontrollable wave of
grief, anger, pain and
release swept me away."***

I too had grieved the disappearance of many women from our community. I vowed not to disappear. My feminist identity, my political vision and my personal integrity depended on me staying visible even in the face of public and private shunning, emotional and verbal abuse and the targeted trashing by my so-called family of friends.

My second coming out was extremely and profoundly hurtful. I developed a thick psychological and emotional armor to survive the fire but up until the last several months that armor had also protected own sense of betrayal, and abandonment and emotionally distanced me.

There has been the personal reality and the political reality of being on the outside looking in after I was "kicked out." In my heart of hearts and in the vision I hold out, I knew I was not permanently outside because in reality there is no "inside vs. outside," no "us vs. them" only the various oppressions working all our nerves. So as the tears stream down my cheeks and the armor begins to fall away I realize I am coming full circle.

Lesbians like Joan, Dee and Kerry Lobel are touching the once protected places inside my heart and listening as I access long buried memories. On this Celebrate Bisexuality Day I am honoring my whole bisexual history which includes both my coming out stories. These conversations are a welcome relief/release and for me are one sign of the unity I am working towards and long for because the rest of my life isn't as long as it used to be.

Media & Visibility Working Group

Timothy Turner will act as coordinator of the BiNet USA media and visibility working group. It will be an umbrella group working over three specific areas of media and visibility for BiNet USA. The umbrella working group is "binet-mediavisible@onelist.com". Here are the three groups:

1) Media (bi-media@onelist.com)

This group will find and discuss media outlets and opportunities, develop strategies, collect information, submit proposals establish dialogue, making connections, and present BiNet USA to media outlets.

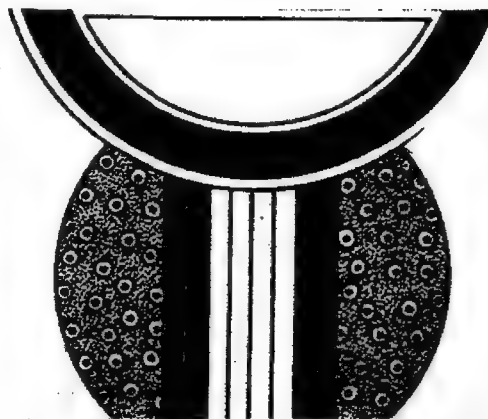
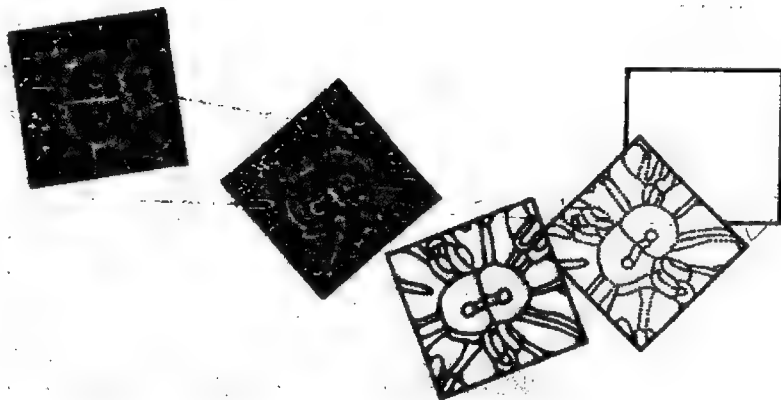
2) Editors (binet-editors@onelist.com)

This group will edit all press work coming from BiNet USA, provide suggestions and opportunities to the media group.

3) Visibility (binet-visibility@onelist.com)

This group will discuss creative opportunities to present BiNet USA. We will discuss important opportunities, conference participation, liaison opportunities, and general visibility opportunities. They will strategize goals, develop paper presentations, and submit proposals to BiNet USA.

If you are interested in being a part of this exciting group, contact Tim Turner: turner@binetusa.org.



BiNet USA and BiNet Houston Proudly Present The South Central Regional Conference

Celebrating The Bisexual Family of Choice

What is bisexuality? What do bisexuals have to do with the queer community? What is polyamoroy? Bisexual myths and beyond? These are some of the questions that will be explored at this years bisexual conference. We as bisexuals, are part of the queer community. While some are in the closet, others are highly visible. Come and learn about bisexuality, the bisexual movement, and meet national bisexual activists.

The bisexual family is a diverse group of individuals who represent a wide range of lifestyles. Learn about the whole spectrum of bisexuality: gay identified bisexuals to straight identified bisexuals, monogamy to polyamory, gender bending to gender non-specific, pagan to traditional mainstream religions, kink to casual, all are represented in the bisexual family of choice.

This conference has a little bit of something for everyone. There will be workshops and parties. We have built in a wide diverse set of events and workshops. While we realize that some of the events are not everyone's cup of tea, we present a wide range of activities for the purpose of mutual education and enlightenment. Participation in all events is completely voluntary. Come and have fun doing events which appeal to you. The conference is open to everyone: gay, lesbian, transgendered, bisexual, heterosexual, and leather folk are all welcome. The goal of this conference is to bring a diverse group of people together to share ideas, build alliances and unify the whole community in an effort to bring equality to all people.

The South Central Region includes Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana. People from all over the country will be coming in to provide workshops and entertainment. Keynote speakers include Fritz Klein, M.D., Dr. Carol Queen, and Wayne Bryant.

Registration fees: Regular \$45.00 per person, Student & Elderly \$30.00, Low Income Fees Waived. We welcome all sexual orientations, gender orientations, people of color, differently abled, and cultural and economic diversity. For information and a printable registration form, go to: <http://www.flash.net/~bihouse/conference/> or write to BiNet Houston, PO Box 667041, Houston, TX 77266 or call (713) 467-4380.



Conference Schedule

(Note: Some events may include nudity or strong sexual content. These events will be marked with an asterisk (*), and are closed to participants under 18 years of age. Also note that some events overlap.)

Friday October 22

5:00 - 7:30 p.m.: Registration

5:00 - 6:00 p.m.: Social Hour

6:00 - 7:30 p.m.: Welcome, Opening Announcements, and first keynote address: Dr. Fritz Klein will give an oral history of some of the bi movement, welcome the participants, and set the mood for an exciting and enriching conference.

7:30 - 8:00 p.m.: BiNet South Central Region Business meeting: This will be a short business meeting where people may submit their nominations for Regional Organizer/Youth Regional Organizer, or bring up other motions to be considered at the Regional meeting on Sunday.

8:00 - 9:45 PM: Body Massage* (clothing optional)

8:30 - 10:00 p.m.: Pagan Opening Ceremony. Join in a celebration of family, bisexuality, love and kindred spirits. A pagan ritual led by Gigi Raven Wilbur will include casting a circle, focusing life energy, expressing desires and wishes, drumming, dancing, and celebrating our bisexuality. The ceremony will be interactive - bring your drums or come and chant!

10:30 p.m. - 12:00 am: Pagan Workshop An introduction to solo paganism and The Temple Prostitute Priestess. A look at archetypal roles and incorporating

these roles into ritual. There will be a discussion on sex magick. There will be a presentation about the pagan altar and sacred symbols. The role of the Shaman in ancient civilizations, the role of bisexuality, and bigendered connections with spirituality will be discussed.

10:00 p.m. - 12:00 am: BiSpace - Hospitality Suite

Saturday October 23

8:00 am - 6:00 p.m.: Vendor Sales

8:00 am - 11:00 am: Registration

9:00 am - 10:30 am: Welcome/What is BiNet? and second keynote speech by Wayne Bryant: "Beyond Bisexual" An examination of the bisexual identity and the usefulness of labels in general in the battle to make America safe for diversity.

10:45 am - 12:15 p.m.: First breakout workshop session:

1. **Bi 101 and the Klein Scale** by Dr. Fritz Klein. This workshop will cover the question of what is sexual orientation and what is Bisexuality. Dr. Klein will explain the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid, which has seven variables and three time periods. Each person will fill out his or her grid and learn just where they fit on the continuum. In addition, the three types of bisexuals across the continuum will be reviewed.

2. **Bisexuality and the Media** by Michael Szymanski. Tell your story to the world, are you ready to? Really? This is a hands-on seminar about going on talk shows, the pitfalls of it, writing letters to the editor and telling your own stories about your sexuality. How do you do it and make sense?

3. **Exhibitionism for the Shy/Exhibitionism for the Brazen*** by Carol Queen. Her focus, whether in writing, speaking, consulting, or providing erotic entertainment, is to empower and inspire others to discover their own unique sexual profile - we have to remove the stigma from sex before we can make it fabulous.

12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.: Lunch - Barbecue in the Hospitality Suite or on your own. The hotel provides shuttle service free of charge to restaurants and shopping within a few miles of the hotel.

1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.: Second breakout workshop session:

4. **Forging a Bi-Trans Alliance** by Vanessa Edwards Foster, Sarah Depalma, Wendy Curry, and Gigi Raven Wilbur. An interactive workshop which will explore a brief outline of the transsexual and bisexual communities, differences and commonalities between the bi and trans movements, and explore ways to provide support and become involved in joint projects which promote the GLBT movement as whole. We will also discuss EBAH (Equality Begins at Home) and the and the focus will be on building a Bi-Trans Alliance in our Region.

5. **Neither Fish nor Fowl: The Bisexual as a Queer Among Queers** by Tony Michael Roberts. "Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers. It is an identity without an essence," says David Halperin.

This will be an interactive workshop, where the participants will be encouraged to discuss the above quote in terms of their own experience. Dr. Roberts will open with a brief formal presentation and then facilitate the discussion.

6. Love Who I Want To: Exploring Attractions and Orientation by Timothy Turner.

An interactive discussion on gender, sexuality, attractions and orientation. Leave your labels at the door. We will explore our attractions, lust, love, and curiosity. The workshop will be a series of topics from both the presenter and the audience. We will move beyond our current labels and into a new perspective on attractions and orientation.

3:00 p.m. - 4:15 p.m. Third breakout workshop session

7. Is the Bisexual Movement part of the Gay Movement? Should it be? by Wendy Curry. Many people believe that Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, and Transgendered people (G/L/B/T) must stick together; that there is strength in numbers. Others believe that the Bisexual movement calls into question the belief systems of ALL monosexuals (including gays and lesbians), and that by partnering with the larger queer movement, we dilute our message. What do you think? This open discussion will examine the pros and cons of both camps (and any others that show up).

8. Health Matters for Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Women by Deborah Bell. Women's health has been viewed as the treatment of body parts, mostly of their reproductive systems, but women's health is much more than that.

What is the intersection of health and sexuality? What are the risk factors we need to be concerned about? And why is homophobia and biphobia a barrier to quality care?

9. Bisexual Adult Entertainment (BI Porn)* by Mickey Skee. An overview of adult videos and bisexuality in porn with some clips shown and frank sexual discussions. Includes an overview of safer sex in the adult industry, the history of bisexuality, what makes it bisexual, why it works, and why it doesn't, ad behind-the-scenes stories about porn shoots and locations, perhaps with people in the business, too.

4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Women's Gathering facilitated by J. Wilbur. All women (however you wish to define the term, no panties will be checked at the door) are invited to participate in an interactive discussion of body image and what it means to be female in this society. A reading from "The Vagina Monologues" by Eve Ensler will be followed by a time of creation and discussion as women are encouraged to talk about images of their sexuality, body image, and women's relationships with their bodies (or lack thereof). This is a time of fun and exploration, and all are encouraged to participate in whatever way is most comfortable for them.

Androgynous Gathering facilitated by Gigi Raven Wilbur.

As a bigendered (intersexed) individual, I have often questioned what it is to live in a female/male dichotomous society. In this gathering, we will explore gender identity issues and body image as

well as the fit between spiritual gender identity and physical gender identity. Discussions will include but are not limited to gender expression and ways to enhance one's perceived gender identity.

Men's Gathering - description not available at press time.

6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.: Dinner, the Bi Awards, and entertainment by Davida

8:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.: Brief BiNet business meeting (members need not attend if they have attended the Friday meeting, or have no proposals for Sunday. Nominations for RO/YRO will close at the end of this meeting.

8:30 p.m. - 3:00 am: Bisexual Ball
Costumes permitted and encouraged, but no nudity. This will be a smoke-free event.

8:30 p.m. - 3:00 am: Dungeon* - hosted by WIP Society, Mistress Eliza, and Mistress Kiki. The Dungeon design will include unique equipment. Special sound and textured lighting provided by Jay Smiley, a professional technician. Experienced piercer and Spankers will be available for your pleasure.

9:00 p.m. - 12:00 am: Bisexual Gathering*. Rumor has it that Mickey Skee may kick off the event with a short presentation on The Art of Male Masturbation.

12:00 am - 3:00 am: After Hours Radio Program - KPFT 90.1 Radio will be airing *live* from the conference.

12:00 am - 2:00 am: Parlor games/BiSpace: Truth or Dare and A Question of Scruples, or bring your favorite game! Hosted by Deborah Dixon.

Sunday, October 24

10:00 am - 11:30 am: Fourth Breakout Workshop Sessions

10. A Family Portrait: Sharing our Bipolyfidelitous Lives by Ron Owen. Ron will be sharing an intimate and personal look at his lifelong dream turned into reality; his life over the last 19 years with his lovers and the two wonderful children they have created together. You will get to share some of the Union Ceremony for the triad and talk about raising children in a poly family. It will be a time to share and ask questions to think about what your lifelong dream is all about.

11. Bi Community Building and Visibility by Michael Page. My intention is to give participants the opportunity to brainstorm various ways in which we can build actual bi community and visibility within our own cities. I would like to offer some of my experiences and present our South Florida Survey in which 100 participants answered the question: "what do bi people want?"

BiNet Houston is a social/political support group of bisexuals and bi-friendly individuals who promote a diverse set of alternative lifestyles. We serve the community by providing a safe environment to explore bisexual issues and to meet other individuals who share similar beliefs. We are also involved in dispelling myths about the bisexual experience by combating fears and misconceptions within our society. As bisexuals we are in a unique position to unify the queer and straight communities in an effort to bring equality to all human beings. Bi-Net voice line: (713) 467-4380 or email: bihouse@flash.net.

12. REEL Bisexuals by Wayne Bryant. This will be a history of bisexual characters in film, complete with actual movie clips and commentary/discussion by Mr. Bryant. A discussion of bisexual images and characters in the media will follow.

11:45 am - 1:30 p.m. Meet Bi Authors, Book Signings, Paper Presentations and Surveys

13. (12:00 - 12:30) Bisexual Identity formation: An Exploratory Study by J. Alison Bess. The validity of a staged development model of bisexual identity development for women was investigated. A model of bisexual identity development with 13 stages, based on Cass's Homosexual Identity formation model and Brady's Self Identity Questionnaire, was proposed. The Bisexual Identity Formation Questionnaire (available at the session) was developed to test this model.

12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Lunch - in the Hospitality Suite or on your own. The hotel provides free shuttle service to restaurants and shopping within a few miles of the hotel.

1:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. BiNet South Central Business meeting. Come and cast your vote for our New Regional organizer and first Youth Regional Organizer.

2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Closing announcements and third keynote address, by Carol Queen.

4:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. After Conference Party.



That Naked Place

by Lani Ka'ahumanu

For now I look you in the eye and say
 I will not be the skeleton in our family closet
 I will not be your homo or heterosexual assumption
 I will not be your scapegoat
 I will not be controlled
 I will not be contained
 I will not betray my truth
 I am spontaneous combustion
 I am fluid motion seeking her compliment
 I am language searching for new meaning
 I am social construction looking to change
 I am a sexual borderline bandit
 a traitor to the cause
 I am in-law and out-law
 connected at your hip
 I am your nitty gritty
 raw naked to the bone
 shameless fluid desire
 come home
 I am your primal cream
 I am your forbidden dream
 I am beyond binary
 I am sexual
 without category
 I am sexual
 without gendered reference points
 riding the chemistry
 as it unfolds
 I am a free range chicken
 don't fence me in
 I can cockadoodle doo your do
 and lay with the best of your hens
 I am a criss-cross hop scotching
 ready or not here I come
 boat rocking radical
 in a swiftly shifting paradigm
 heading towards the next millennium
 If I pass
 for other than what I am
 do you feel safer?
 I ask
 where do you draw your lines?
 whose back do you watch?
 who do you include?
 Do you hear what I'm saying?
 If I pass
 for other than what I am
 do you feel safer?

My light skin
 My female lover
 when I have one,
 or for that matter,
 My male lover
 when I have one,
 are tickets
 to games
 I don't want to play
 I am the bone of your contention
 I am the white noise whisper that will not cease
 I am the muddy waters, the complication,
 the confusion of issues
 I will not give up my freedom for safety
 I will not be patronized
 I will not be tokenized
 I will not be tolerated, and
 I will not be quiet
 I have been here all along
 I have as much to give,
 as I am given
 This is a two way street
 I am a sexual politic
 free to follow the geography of my desire
 I am a human politic
 carving out new language
 in a time when there are no pat answers
 I want us to go to that naked place
 where terror
 and the desire for justice
 lives inside our souls
 Search for the place
 that remembers,
 we are family,
 we are a tribe, one among many
 we are connected and dependent upon the earth,
 the air we breathe,
 the food we eat,
 the water we drink,
 and each other
 We are the descendants and the ancestors
 I want us to go to that naked place
 where we remember the truth,
 for the truth is all we have,
 and, the truth is all we need
 If we do this,
 If we really do this
 we can influence the flow of evolution,
 by risking being part of the change

Roberts, Wayne. "BiNet News." BiNet News., fall 1999, pp. [1]+.
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Accessed 30 Dec. 2024.